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SUBJECT: AMIS CEASEFIRE COMMISSION WEEK OF MARCH 26: DYSFUNCTION
TO BREAKDOWN - SLA/MINAWI ON STRIKE

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SUBJECT: AMIS CEASEFIRE COMMISSION WEEK OF MARCH 26: DYSFUNCTION
TO BREAKDOWN - SLA/MINAWI ON STRIKE

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) With no specific cases to examine, Ceasefire Commission (CFC) discussions continued to revolve around AMIS' proposed restructuring of the body. SLA/Minawi, this week joined by the Sudanese government and other DPA signatories, railed against the proposed reduction in salary payments and number of representatives per sector. SLA/Minawi later issued a statement proclaiming that they would go on "strike" for one week beginning March 30. This issue, if not quickly resolved, stands to further alienate DPA signatories and lead to another crisis similar to the ejection of non-signatories in August 2006. The Government denied responsibility for an alleged March 22 aerial bombing near the Chad-Sudan border. With both AMIS language assistants and SLA/Minawi representatives striking, AMIS is effectively closed for business. End summary.

CFC RESTRUCTURING TURMOIL

¶2. (SBU) Despite its obvious absence from the CFC agendas during the week of March 26, SLA-Minawi representatives continued to deride AMIS' proposals to restructure the ceasefire mechanism (reftels). These concerns were echoed by other CFC representatives, including the Government, which argued that AMIS was deliberately attempting to undermine the ceasefire body to justify more urgent UN intervention. Deputy Force Commander Rurangwa, chairing the CFC in the Force Commander's absence, repeatedly attempted to steer the conversation away from the CFC restructuring, holding that it was a political matter decided at the Khartoum level in conjunction with the international community. Complaints, he asserted, should be channeled through the appropriate political leaders in the capital. (Comment: While the March 11 meeting convened by the AU in Khartoum for the international community previewed the proposed changes in the CFC, donors only agreed that representatives' monthly payments should be reduced. No consensus was achieved in determining the final salaries or the precise number of representatives per sector. End Comment.)

¶3. (SBU) SLA/Minawi CFC representatives expressed frustration at AMIS' lack of investigations and "failure to neutrally implement the DPA." (Note: Despite a recent surge in potential ceasefire

violations, AMIS has noted only one active investigation in its situation reports for several weeks. End Note.) The movement's exasperation culminated March 29 when it declared that it would not participate for one week in any AMIS activities, including patrolling, investigations or CFC deliberations. In its nine-page statement, SLA/Minawi accused the National Congress Party (NCP) of undermining the DPA and asserted that the African Union (AU) was complicit in these activities. The document specifically cites the AU's failure to "play its role in the disarmament of the Janjaweed...carry out early verification of the positions controlled by the parties...(and) provide logistic non-military support as provided for by the DPA."

¶4. (SBU) The SLA-Minawi statement blamed AMIS Force Commander Aprezi for "the harm to our movement" and concludes that he "can hardly be described as impartial or objective." Citing several cases, it alleged that the Force Commander unjustly accused the Movement of various misdeeds, denigrated the integrity of SLA/Minawi and worked "at driving a wedge between the people and the Movement." The SLA/Minawi statement further explained its opposition to AMIS' reconfiguration of the CFC. It lays down an ultimatum that all SLA/Minawi personnel will strike for one week, beginning March 30, pending positive resolution of six demands:

- AMIS reverses its suspension of activities in SLA/Minawi-controlled areas (prompted after the killing of two Nigerian AMIS soldiers on March 5 in Graida, South Darfur, an area controlled by SLA/Minawi forces).
- Retraction of "unilateral" decisions by the Force Commander, including refusal to allow Movement representatives to attend AMIS morning briefings or receive the daily situation report.
- Reconsideration of AMIS' decision to reduce CFC representatives' Monthly Subsistence Allowance (MSA).
- Assurance that AMIS will not reduce the number of SLA/Minawi representatives serving as CFC participants and military observers.
- Greater AMIS cooperation with SLA-Minawi in providing

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communications and transportation.
-- AMIS must give "due respect for all our reps."

CFC AND AMIS INERTIA

¶5. (SBU) No cases were considered during the week of March 26, despite a number of potential ceasefire violations that occurred over the previous weeks. The U.S. observer enumerated a number of specific recent cases - alleged Sudanese government aerial bombardment March 22 on the Chad-Sudan border, an alleged Arab militia attack March 24 on Sirba in West Darfur, the March 24 killing of SLA/Minawi South Darfur Security Arrangements Committee Head Abdel Shafee Juma Arabi, among other incidents - and urged the acting CFC Chairman to issue orders to all relevant sectors to carry out immediate investigations. Deputy Force Commander Rurangwa acknowledged the importance of swift AMIS action but, in the same breath, pointed out that the ongoing language assistants strike and absence of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and SLA-Non-signatory Factions (SLA-NSF) representatives at AMIS effectively precluded carrying out any investigations, particularly in areas held by the non-signatories.

¶6. (SBU) Responding to a direct query from the U.S. observer, Government representatives denied that Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) carried out any aerial bombing along the Chad-Sudan border. (Note: AMIS has been unable to verify the March 22 attack as some of the bombings occurred on the Chad side of the border and because the affected zones on the Sudanese side are controlled by DPA non-signatories. The CFC EU Second Vice Chairman, French Brigadier General Sintes, confided to the U.S. Observer that French forces based in Chad verified the bombardment, as had locals and NGOs operating in the area. End Note.) CFC participants noted a number of on-going, unresolved matters, including joint AMIS-Sudanese government review of the Janjaweed disarmament plan (due for presentation to the CFC on April 4), completion of the areas-of-control verification exercise (due by April 2), and next

steps in resurrecting the failed CFC Second Chamber.

COMMENT

¶7. (SBU) AMIS Force Commander Luke Aprezi has sought to shift responsibility for the CFC restructuring decisions to the AU and donor nations, when he devised and presented the options as a fait accompli at the March 11 meeting in Khartoum. The DPA signatories have little legal ground to protest the reduction of MSA, though they have ample justification under Article 25, paragraph 233 to argue against any reduction in the number of representatives, which the DPA holds should be increased. From a practical standpoint, it is logical to have at least two Movement representatives per Sector (vice only one, as proposed by AMIS) in the event that there are multiple patrols or one representative is indisposed. This issue, if not quickly resolved, stands to further alienate DPA signatories and lead to another crisis similar to the ejection of non-signatories in August 2006 - from which AMIS and the peace-process has yet to recover.

¶8. (SBU) Comment continued: In the days preceding the March 29 SLA/Minawi statement, the movement's representatives were only sporadically participating in AMIS activities. Patrols have dwindled to negligible levels. Tensions between AMIS and SLA/Minawi are at an all-time high, exacerbated by AMIS' perceived lack of neutrality, its inability to facilitate the delivery of non-military logistical support and its accusations (many of them probably justified) of SLA-Minawi involvement in several recent carjackings and hostile confrontations. The implications of this state of affairs - compounded by the March 24 attack on SLA/Minawi facilities in Khartoum - may lead to further defections by field commanders from SLA-Minawi. Without rapid, concerted and coordinated international attention to address both AMIS and SLA-Minawi's legitimate grievances, the peace process will stall. End comment.

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